

The Administration v. the Critics

THE pace of U.S. troop withdrawals? Negotiating tactics? Saigon's ability to fight? Has the basic American stake in Viet Nam changed? These are some of the questions of the war debate, issues on which thousands of lives depend and to which there are no simple answers. They are also problems that are in danger of being obscured as Richard Nixon's counterattack on the tactics and legitimacy of dissent overshadow-

turing the Governor's mansion, so Agnew had kind words for the incumbent, Democrat Albert Brewer. In his speech the Vice President continued and broadened the previous week's attack on television news presentations to include print journalism (*see THE PRESS*). Agnew did not ignore his more familiar adversary, radical youth. In other statements, Agnew has blamed journalism for ballooning the militants' dimensions. In Montgomery, the Vice President even invoked the names of George Kennan, Irving Kristol and others of the Eastern intellectual fraternity—more usually targets of his contempt—because they had spoken out cogently against unreasoned campus rebellion. No effete snobs, they.

To Agnew, the wilder youngsters are a "breed of losers," to whom he juxtaposed "our heroes" returning from Viet Nam "without limbs or eyes, with scars they shall carry the rest of their lives." The burden of the message was clear: right-thinking Americans must choose between those who win the red badge of courage and those who wave the red flag of dishonor. Without question, the more extreme antiwar partisans have earned that kind of comparison. The real issue, however, is not the courage of those who fight the war but whether their courage is being expended wisely.

Main Indictment. In an article written for the current *LIFE*, Agnew lumps civil disobedience in racial disputes together with antiwar activity. He comes up with a general condemnation of "emotion-provoking tactics." The main indictment: "Protest is generally negative in content." Agnew has plenty of company on the Administration firing line. The U.S. Information Agency sent to 104 countries around the world a 15-minute film called *The Silent Majority*, the theme of which is that most of America supports Nixon on Viet Nam. On dissent, it advises foreign viewers that "the loudest sound is not the only one that should be listened to." Postmaster General Winton Blount returned from Viet Nam to declare that antiwar demonstrations encourage the Communists to fight on. Therefore, said Blount, protests have the effect of "killing American boys."

If the Administration's campaign against newsmen was mainly psychological, the counteroffensive against those who organized the antiwar marches in Washington Nov. 13 through 15 may take the form of criminal prosecutions. Last week Deputy Attorney General Richard Kleindienst volunteered the news that "some members" of the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Viet Nam are being investigated for possible violation of the federal riot conspiracy law.

Though the two main Washington marches were entirely peaceful, and though the Washington police took a rel-



AGNEW



MITCHELL

ows the core questions. Opponents of his policies have managed to outshout—but not outnumber—those willing to give Nixon more time. Convinced that strong public support in the U.S. is essential if Hanoi's intransigence is to be shaken, the Administration seems to be concentrating on discrediting responsible critics and uncertain skeptics as well as irresponsible opponents.

Spearhead Spiro. Last week the Administration again attacked its tormentors, real and imagined. Once more Vice President Spiro Agnew served as eager spearhead, delivering another speech written by Nixon Aide Pat Buchanan. The broadside came on a mission to Alabama as part of Agnew's attempts to protect the Administration's Southern flank. The White House would like to prevent George Wallace from recap-

atively benign attitude toward the two violent incidents that did occur on successive nights, the Justice Department viewed the handful of extremists and fanatics with alarm. That the extremists looked for trouble and found it is not in dispute. Attorney General John Mitchell's three-page appraisal devoted one sentence to the pacific nature of the main events, the rest to the troubles near the South Vietnamese embassy and the Justice Department headquarters. He talked of "detailed plans formulated by violence-prone revolutionary groups" and concluded: "The blame for the violence must lie primarily with the New Mobilization Committee." As Mitchell's wife put it on a CBS interview last week: "My husband made the comment to me that looking out of the Justice Department [while the demonstration was in progress], it looked like a Russian revolution going on."

Rocky Kooks. Herb Klein, Nixon's communications director, and Police Chief Jerry Wilson, by contrast, praised the work of about 3,000 parade marshals deployed by the New Mobe. Six parade marshals worked out of an office at police headquarters, and Wilson admonished his men to behave so that demonstrators "may look back on this day with pleasure." When violence did break out, Wilson took personal command on the scene. Later he said that there had been only 25 "real troublemakers" and perhaps another 150 willing to follow them. Five policemen and 97 demonstrators were injured, none seriously. There were 114 arrests, but 111 of them were for disorderly conduct. Property damage consisted mainly of broken windows. While none of the violations can be condoned, and while the rock-throwing kooks showed their typical disregard for the safety and rights of others, the violence was minor compared with what even a mediocre conspiracy could have provoked among a turnout of 250,000 or more.

For the present, the Administration seems to have gained points. It has stimulated loyalist demonstrations in the streets and awakened latent doubts about the wisdom and motives of those who criticize in print and on television. The peace movement appears to be out of breath and, given its internal divisions, uncertain about what to do next. The opposition's large street productions seem likely to decline. Congressional doves have distanced themselves somewhat from the mass protests. Even New York Senator Charles Goodell, one of the loudest doves, suggests that it may be time for the dissenters to return to more conventional political methods. If this helps the Administration's program of orderly and gradual withdrawal from Viet Nam, it will be all to the good. But it remains to be seen whether in the long run the Administration's counteroffensive will impress Hanoi, as it is designed to, or can help to re-establish national unity in the U.S.

NEGOTIATIONS

Lodge Leaves Paris

"We are at rock bottom now in these talks, so it doesn't really make any difference who sits around that table," one frustrated American official commented in Paris. The view from Washington seems similar and that helps explain why President Nixon last week accepted—"with great regret and warmest thanks"—Henry Cabot Lodge's resignation as chief U.S. negotiator at the deadlocked Paris peace talks. Lodge's deputy, Manhattan Attorney Lawrence Walsh, also quit. Both resignations will be effective on Dec. 8.

Lodge's eagerness to return to Massachusetts had been well known for more than a month (TIME, Oct. 17). He gave "personal matters at home" as



LODGE

In no hurry for a replacement.

his reason for leaving. Except for a few months' leave, Lodge has seen little of his family, which includes two married sons and ten grandchildren, since he became President Kennedy's Ambassador to Viet Nam in 1963. "I am not a diplomat. I am a family man, and I miss my family," Lodge explained.

Lodge probably would have stayed on if he had seen any sign of movement in the talks. An exponent of the theory that the war will fade away rather than end with a formal settlement, he became convinced that the Communists have no desire to seek an agreement. They are not likely to do so, he thinks, unless the South Vietnamese forces prove their capacity to carry on the war indefinitely. They would require continued massive American support and that, Lodge believes, would be forthcoming—if at all—only with fewer draftees and more volunteers in a different U.S. Army. In sum, Lodge apparently feels, Hanoi more than ever